

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15
NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 TRSE-00 OMB-01
ACDA-12 NEAE-00 SSM-03 MCT-01 /090 W
-----122932 241849Z /45

O R 241737Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 2163
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
USMISSION USUN NY
USMISSION SINAI

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E. O. 11652: NA
TAGS: PINT IS US
SUBJ: ALARM IN ISRAEL AFTER FAILURE OF WASHINGTON TALKS

1. SUMMARY: WASHINGTON TALKS ARE PRONOUNCED A FAILURE,
AND PRESS REACTS WITH ALARM. CONTINUING US PRESSURE IS
EXPECTED AFTER A SHORT BREATHING-SPACE FOR BEGIN. GOI
ATTEMPTED TO PUT BEST FACE ON WASHINGTON FAILURE,
BUT ONLY THE POST PARTIALLY BOUGHT THIS LINE. AFTERNOON
PRESS CONTAINED NUMEROUS STORIES ON AMERICAN PRESSURE,
MACHINATIONS, AND PLANS. ALONG WITH ALARM, THERE ARE
TWO CONTRADICTORY REACTIONS: DEFENSIVE SOLIDARITY BEHIND
THE NATIONAL LEADER AND DOUBTS ABOUT HIS LEADERSHIP AND
POLICIES. IT IS UNCLEAR WHICH REACTION WILL SHAPE SHORT-
TERM POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS. END SUMMARY
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2. THE "FAILURE" OF THE WASHINGTON TALKS IS THE SUBJECT
OF EXTENSIVE REPORTING AND COMMENTARY IN THE FRIDAY
PRESS. THAT THE TALKS FAILED IS TAKEN FOR GRANTED AND
THERE IS A GENERAL SENSE OF ALARM OVER THE IMPLI-
CATIONS OF AN OPEN CONFRONTATION WITH THE US FOR THE
PEACE PROCESS AND FOR ISRAEL'S SECURITY.

3. THERE IS GENERAL AGREEMENT ON A NUMBER OF POINTS, AS EXPRESSED IN TODAY'S PRESS. WHETHER OR NOT A CONFRONTATION WITH THE US WAS AVOIDABLE, THE WASHINGTON TALKS ARE SEEN TO HAVE EXPOSED THE BASIC DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE US AND ISRAELI POSITIONS, LEAVING ISRAEL ON THE SPOT, DENUDED OF THE KIND OF AMERICAN SUPPORT TO WHICH IT IS ACCUSTOMED. IT IS GENERALLY EXPECTED THAT THE US ADMINISTRATION WILL CONTINUE TO EXERT THE KIND OF PRESSURE MOUNTED THIS WEEK IN WASHINGTON, WITH THE AIM OF FORCING A CHANGE IN ISRAEL'S NEGOTIATING POSITION AND/OR ITS LEADERSHIP. MOST OBSERVERS ARE PREDICTING THAT THIS SECOND STAGE OF THE US PRESSURE CAMPAIGN WILL NOT COME FOR AT LEAST TWO WEEKS SO THAT BEGIN IS GIVEN SUFFICIENT TIME TO REFLECT ON THE "OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES", AND RESPOND MORE POSITIVELY TO THE ADMINISTRATIONS VIES.

4. THERE WAS A BARELY PERCEPTIBLE ATTEMPT BY THE GOVERNMENT-IN PRONOUNCEMENTS BY DAYAN, BEGIN AND VARIOUS OFFICIALS IN THEIR MINISTRIES-TO HIGHLIGHT THE FEW ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE VISIT AND TO GLOSS OVER THE NEGATIVE ASPECTS. WHILE THE BULK OF THE JERUSALEM POST'S REPORTING FROM WASHINGTON FOLLOWS THIS LINE, THE REST OF THE PRESS DOES NOT GO ALONG WITH THE GOVERNMENTS ATTEMPT TO PUT THE BEST POSSIBLE FACE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ON THE EVENTS IN WASHINGTON. YEDIOT AND MA'ARIV ARE PARTICULARLY ALARMIST. YEDIOT'S BANNER READS "BEGIN: THESE WERE THE THREE MOST DIFFICULT DAYS OF MY LIFE." BOTH PAPERS ARE REplete WITH STORIES OF ADMINISTRATION PRESSURE CAMPAIGNS, PLANS TO INTERFERE IN ISRAEL'S INTERNAL AFFAIRS, DISASTROUS EROSION OF THE AMERICAN PUBLIC'S SUPPORT FOR ISRAEL, AND A CARTER PLAN FOR THE MIDDLE EAST WHICH IS SIMILAR TO AND AS DANGEROUS AS THE RODGERS PLAN. SIGNIFICANTLY, YEDIOT FINDS ROOM ON THE FRONT PAGE TO REPORT EGYPTIAN SATISFACTION WITH LONG AWAITED ATTAINMENT OF US "NEUTRALITY."

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ACDA-12 NEAE-00 SSM-03 MCT-01 /090 W
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FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
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INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
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4. ACCOMPANYING A GENERAL SENSE OF ALARM AND DISTRESS,
THERE ARE TWO CONFLICTING TENDENCIES WHICH ARE IMMEDIATELY
APPARENT IN THE PRESS AND THE PUBLIC REACTION OF KNESSET
MEMBERS. THERE IS ON THE ONE HAND A NATURAL DEFENSIVE
REFLEX, A FEELING THAT ISRAEL MUST CONFRONT EXTERNAL
CHALLENGES UNITED. ON THE OTHER HAND, THERE ARE THOSE
WHO QUESTION THE POLICIES OF A GOVERNMENT WHICH IS
PARTIALLY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE BREAKDOWN OF THE PEACE
NEGOTIATIONS AND THE CRISIS IN US-ISRAELI RELATIONS.
SOME REACTIONS ARE PREDICTABLE. AL-HAMISHMAR, FOR
EXAMPLE, INCLUDES ON ITS FRONT PAGE (IN ADDITION TO THE
REPORTS FROM WASHINGTON, WHICH INDICATE THAT "BEGIN
WONT MODERATE HIS LINE") A MAPAM DECLARATION THAT
BEGIN HAS FAILED AND "HE MUST DRAW THE CONCLUSIONS" --
HE MUST RESIGN. ALSO ON THE FRONT PAGE ARE THE RESULTS
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OF A NEW PORI POLL WHICH INDICATE STRONG OPPOSITION
TO GOVERNMENT SETTLEMENT POLICY, AS WELL AS HARD-HITTING
EDITORIAL ENTITLED "THE DOWNFALL" WHICH CALLS FOR THE
DISSOLUTION OF THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT. DAVAR IS
NEARLY AS CRITICAL. ITS EDITORIAL ALSO CALLS FOR NEW
ELECTIONS AND ATTACKS DAYAN FOR MISLEADING THE PUBLIC
BY MINIMIZING THE DIMENSIONS OF THE US-ISRAELI RIFT.
ACCOMPANYING COMMENTARY BY RUBENSTEIN AND SELA WHICH
DECRY GOVERNMENT POLICY IN SOUTH LEBANON, EDITOR

HANNA ZEMER PULLS NO PUNCHES IN CALLING FOR LAUNCHING AN "INTERNAL STRUGGLE" IN ORDER FINALLY TO FORMULATE FOREIGN POLICY POSITIONS WHICH REFLECT THE WILL OF THE MAJORITY OF ISRAELIS, UNLIKE THE PHONY CONSENSUS WHICH BEGIN CLAIMS TO ENJOY. "AN EXTREMIST GROUP" HAS ALREADY DRIVEN ISRAEL TO UNNECESSARY CONFRONTATIONS AND IS LIKELY TO DO SO IN THE FUTURE UNLESS THE LABOR PARTY BEGINS TO ASSERT ITSELF AS A RESPONSIBLE OPPOSITION ON FOREIGN POLICY MATTERS. COLUMNISTS IN YEDIOT AND MA'ARIV, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF OCCASIONAL DOVES, EXPRESS THE SECOND REACTION, THAT OF DEFENSIVE SOLIDARITY. THEIR CALL IS FOR A UNITED FRONT AGAINST THE EXTERNAL THREAT OF AMERICAN PRESSURE.

5. ONE SENSES THAT MOST ISRAELIS ARE AMBIVALENT WITH REGARD TO BEGIN AND RELATIONS WITH THE US. THEY ARE DEFENSIVE AND SENSITIVE TO AMERICAN CRITICISM BUT AT THE SAME TIME HOLD SOME DOUBTS ABOUT BEGIN'S LEADERSHIP AND POLICY. TODAY'S JERUSALEM POST EDITORIAL EXPRESSES THIS AMBIVALENCE WHEN IT ON THE ONE HAND TALKS OF "INSIDIOUS" AMERICAN PRESSURE AND THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE ADMINISTRATION IS "INTENT ON PUSHING ISRAEL INTO UNACCEPTABLE POSITIONS", WHILE ON THE OTHER LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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HAND CALLING FOR BEGIN TO REASSESS HIS OWN PERFORMANCE AND POLICY TO AVOID A COMPLETE POLITICAL DEADLOCK (THE POST'S EDITORS MUST BE AWARE THAT BEGIN HAS MADE IT CLEAR THAT HE WILL NOT REASSESS HIS POSITIONS ON PEACE NEGOTIATIONS AND ONE WONDERS IF THIS IS THE FIRST SHOT IN A CAMPAIGN AGAINST BEGIN). IT IS NOT IMMEDIATELY CLEAR WHICH OF THE CONFLICTING TENDENCIES WILL DOMINATE ISRAELI REACTION EVEN IN THE SHORT RUN. WHILE BEGIN WILL CLEARLY TRY TO RALLY THE COUNTRY BEHIND HIM, IN AN EXERCISE OF NATIONAL UNITY, WEIZMAN'S CALL FOR A NATIONAL PEACE COALITION, AND CONTINUING COALITION MUTTERINGS MAKE THIS AN UNLIKELY OUTCOME. HOWEVER, IT APPEARS ON THE BASIS OF PERES' INITIAL RESPONSE TO THE WASHINGTON FAILURE THAT LABOR WILL TEST THE WINDS OF PUBLIC OPINION BEFORE IT WILL LEAD ANY STRONG ASSAULT AGAINST THE BEGIN GOVERNMENT. VIETS

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
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Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS COMMENTS, DIPLOMATIC REPRESENTATIONS, PEACE PLANS
Control Number: n/a
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Draft Date: 24 mar 1978
Decaption Date: 20 Mar 2014
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
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Litigation History:
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Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
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Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
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Subject: ALARM IN ISRAEL AFTER FAILURE OF WASHINGTON TALKS
TAGS: PINT, IS, US, (CARTER, JIMMY), (BEGIN, MENAHEM)
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Type: TE
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